



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

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For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 514-6933

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District Woman Pleads Guilty to Fraudulently Using Debit Card of Mother of Deceased Fiance

WASHINGTON – Pamela Ward, 42, of Washington, D.C., pleaded guilty today to one count of fraud in connection with access devices for using the debit card of her deceased fiance's mother, without consent, to purchase \$3,501 in postal money orders and other services, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

The Honorable Deborah A. Robinson, of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, presided over the plea. Sentencing will occur before the Honorable Emmet G. Sullivan, also of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. A sentencing date has not yet been scheduled. The defendant faces up to six months in prison under the voluntary federal sentencing guidelines. As part of her plea, the defendant agreed to pay \$3,501 in restitution and criminal forfeiture.

According to the factual proffer presented at the plea hearing, Ward moved into the victim's home after the death of her fiance in 2005. She assisted the victim with financial matters and consequently had access to the victim's debit card. In 2009, the victim was trying to resolve tax liability with the Internal Revenue Service ("IRS"). The victim attempted to mail at least six checks, each in the amount of \$1,167, to the IRS. Three of these checks, dated May 1, 2009, June 1, 2009, and July 1, 2009, were never received by the IRS.

In each of those months, Ward went to a post office and purchased money orders and other services in the total amount of \$1,167 using the victim's debit card. Some of the money orders claimed to be designated for Ward from the defendant's deceased fiance. The memo section of some of these money orders indicated that the money orders were for child support, even though Ward and her fiance never had any children together.

As part of her fraudulent scheme, in May 2009, Ward handed the victim a forged letter purporting to be from the IRS. The letter referenced the victim's recent payment of \$1,167 to the IRS. The letter stated in part that "we will continue to accept checks but will debt [sic] your account has [sic] soon as payment is receive [sic] and void the check." The letter was signed with the name of a real IRS employee.

In announcing today's guilty plea, U.S. Attorney Machen commended the outstanding investigative work of Special Agent Jean-Paul Lovera of the Office of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration and Postal Inspector Tira Hayward of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. U.S. Attorney Machen also praised the efforts of members of the U.S. Attorney's Office, including Legal Assistant Jamasee Lucas; Assistant U.S. Attorney Diane Lucas, who worked on forfeiture issues; and Assistant U.S. Attorney David Johnson, who is prosecuting the case.

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